

# THEATER OFFERINGS AND STAGE CHAT

## Behind the Footlights

In these last days of the season of 1905-06, in preparation for the coming season of 1906-07, all sorts of things are being tried, on—er, on—the dog? Certainly not! On New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Washington, for instance, got "The Optimist." It might have been worse—much worse, as New York will bear witness. For New York drew "The Girl Patsy," and alas! it was not mutual. The most tolerant criticism of Patsy is a cautious admission that proper management would help it out a whole lot, and that even at that it will need a whole lot of revision before even the dog will swallow it.

Then again it might have been better, for Chicago seems to be tickled to death with "The Student King," the new De Koven opera produced by Savage. It had been tried on the dog and the dog liked it. So apparently did Chicago.

And Boston has nothing but praise for "Young Fernald," the new comedy by Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland and Buelah Marie Dix, produced for the first time on any stage at the Majestic last Monday night. It seems to have made a hit, but then, consider the cast. There are only seven characters in the play, and three of these are taken by Margaret Anglin, Mrs. Thomas Whiffen, and Henry Miller. That looked good to Boston. In fact, it would even look good to Washington.

Once again—it might have been worse, much worse. Look at this list of plays copyrighted up at the Library of Congress in just one week in the merry month of May, and shudder at what might have been:

"An Appeal to the Jury," by Brina M. Carlisle.  
"A Bit of Old Chelsea," a play in one act, by Mrs. Oscar Berlinger.  
"The Black Hawk Mine," by Charles F. Harrison.

"The Burglar and the Dancer," a drama without words, by E. Y. Backus.  
"The Coward," a play in four acts, by G. M. Broadhurst.  
"A Drummer Boy's Samples," a one-act, five-act, and a play in one act, by Mrs. Oscar Berlinger.

"L'Enfant Cherie," a piece in four acts, by Romaine Coolidge.  
"Farmer Haskins," a comedy-drama in four acts, by David Baldridge.  
"Fragments of Fancy and Diversified Drillery," a monologue satirical and reminiscent, by William D. Hall.

"Finian's Rainbow," a farce in one act, by Howard Amesbury.  
"Garden of the Pacific," a drama in five acts, by Wallace Winchell.  
"His Other Self," a play in one act, by Mrs. Oscar Berlinger.

"Low Mediant, the Man From Arizona," a drama in one act, by L. Coghlan.  
"Walburga; or, From Darkness to Light," a drama in four acts, by Very Rev. F. Felix.  
"Ludgila," an historical romantic drama in three acts, by Alphonse Chrostowski.

"A Marriage in a Motor Car," by F. Fenwick Solger.  
"My Rose," a playlet in one act, by John K. O'Neill.  
"Oregon," a play, by June McMillen Ordway.

"Queen of the Secret Service," a sensational melodrama in four acts, by J. Martineau.  
"Richard Morgan; or, When Women Hate," a drama in four acts, by G. Feldhaus.  
"Sentenced to Death; or, In Broad Daylight," a play in one act, by J. Martineau.

"The Siege," a play in one act, by J. Martineau.  
"The Venetian Vendetta; or, The Two Brothers," a drama in three acts, by J. Martineau.  
"A Victim of Villainy," a play in one act, by J. Martineau.

"Weary Willie," a farce in one act, by Charles E. Taylor.  
"Gosh! but the dog deserves sympathy if he has to dig anything like that every week."

And that doesn't include Eleanor Robson's eight new plays for next season. For it is announced that she will begin on September 17, a season of thirty-five weeks, during which she will appear in ten plays, eight of which are new. The authors are Alfred Suto, C. M. S. McLeellan, Eugene W. Presby, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, Israel Zangwill, Clyde Fitch, and Edmond Rostand.

Eleanor will certainly have a strenuous year. Meanwhile, she and her mother have gone abroad for a vacation.

Ola Humphrey, who was recently seen in Washington as "The Little Grey Lady," is on her way to Australia, where for twenty weeks she will be the leading lady in J. C. Williamson's stock company, and possibly for twenty-five weeks after that. They are others, about a dozen of them, on the same steamer, on their way to join the same company.

Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Holland have gone abroad for a vacation.

David Warfield last night closed his season in "The Music Master" in New York, after a run of 533 performances. He proposes in the fall to open for a short New York run, just to bring it up past the 600 mark, and then he will take "The Music Master" on the road. It is said that Belasco means to send it right out to the Pacific coast. And what has Washington done to David that the coast should have precedence? Meanwhile David Warfield is going abroad for a vacation.

He will study in Paris for the next year and then return to New York to take up work at his new profession. Here's luck to him, anyhow. Sister Ethel, by the way, has gone to Maine to spend the summer on an estate she has just purchased.

And Lew Fields has gone abroad on a vacation—a short one, just his size—a few days in London and back to New York for him.

Oh, and new plays—yes, May Irwin has one. At least it's being written for her by George V. Hobart. It isn't named yet, but Miss Irwin is to be a society dame with a penchant for bridge whist.

William H. Crane has gone abroad on a vacation. Germany and Mrs. Crane for his, and then the Savoy Theater, New York in September.

Mrs. Fiske also has a new play, "The New York Idea," by Langdon Mitchell. She and Emily Stevens, her cousin, and a member of her company, have gone to California to spend the summer, resting and studying in the mountains of that State. Mrs. Fiske's role is described as "In some respects the most vital and significant she has yet undertaken."

Frank Dekum, who played "Little Billie" in Trilby this season, has gone abroad for his vacation.

Stella Mayhew has replaced the ample Marie Dressler in Joe Weber's company. Miss Mayhew played a colored "mammy" in "On the Swanee River" for six years, before her talent as an all-round comedienne was recognized. For the past two seasons she has attracted much attention through her work in "Comin' Thro' the Rye," "In Tammany Hall," and as the star in a revival of "The Show Girl."

As for Miss Dressler—the ample Marie has gone abroad for her—no she hasn't either. She has gone abroad to work and will begin almost immediately rehearsals for the musical comedy in which she is to appear under the direction of George Edwards. She will remain on the other side at least a year.

Nance O'Neill took the poor debtor's oath at the Pemberton Square Court, in Boston, on May 22. She lost heavily in the San Francisco fire, nearly everything she owned in scenery, costumes and stage effects being destroyed. Her step was unavoidable, she says. She has postponed the production of her new play, "The Story of the Golden Fleecy," until next season. The piece is by Henry Kirk, a young Californian, and is based upon the romance of Medea and Jason.

Bijou Fernandez is now Mrs. William Abington. They were married in New York last Tuesday and have gone abroad on their wedding trip. Amelia Bingham was matron of honor; Louise Galloway, maid of honor; Charles Richmond, best man, and Vincent Serrano, Wilton Lackaye, Ernest Lawford, De Wolf Hopper and Augustus Barrett, ushers.

"Scotty" has learned how fickle fame can be. He closed his season in Charles A. Taylor's play "King of the Desert Mine," in Chicago recently, and a correspondent from the Windy City says: "The attendance was only fair. Laurette Taylor as Bessie was so bright, thorough and competent that she seemed to overshadow the production. Little Eva was remarkably well played by a diminutive child actress, Edythe Raynor."

Alas, poor Scotty! Back to the ranch for you!

Lee Arthur, the playwright, and Alice Brown, of Washington, were married at the Hotel Gerard, in New York city, on May 21. Mr. Arthur has entirely recovered from the effects of a fall down the subway steps at Forty-second street about a week ago. In July the couple will sail for Holland, where Mr. Arthur is going to consult with Henri de Vries about a new play for the Dutch actor.

Few people knew that when Joseph Wheelock, Jr., closed his season in Washington a couple of months ago, he closed it because he had reached the end of his physical tether. And Washington is fond enough of him to be glad to hear that he has entirely recovered from the operation, which was then necessary, and which was performed at Roosevelt Hospital, New York. He will spend the summer in the West and reappear in "Just Out of College" next fall.

Ben Greet is decidedly interested in "The Music Master" in New York, after a run of 533 performances. He proposes in the fall to open for a short New York run, just to bring it up past the 600 mark, and then he will take "The Music Master" on the road. It is said that Belasco means to send it right out to the Pacific coast. And what has Washington done to David that the coast should have precedence? Meanwhile David Warfield is going abroad for a vacation.

Speaking of Belasco, he's got a new play for Mrs. Leslie Carter—wonder who'll cry, "Stop, thief!" this time—which is said to be entirely unlike anything in which Mrs. Carter has heretofore appeared. There are only half a dozen characters, and the play is said to be a simple story of everyday life.

Emma Eames Story and Julian Story have gone abroad for their vacation, Italy for theirs.

Speaking of new plays James J. Corbett is to have one—a new phase of the detective play—by Langdon McCormick, author of "How Hearts Are Broken," "When the World Sleeps," and others of that ilk. Thrills! Well, I guess.

It must be nice to have so many talents you don't know which to develop. Lionel Barrymore is reported as about to quit the stage and devote himself to art. (No sarcasm intended).

And think of the company they'd be in. It is announced from London that Fred Conquest is appearing at the Lyceum in a sketch called "The Freak's Revenge." It is very strong and introduces a drunken gorilla, that is taught to stab the enemy of the principal character. The gorilla makes a mistake, and there is a struggle that results in the death of the gorilla and the freak as the curtain falls. There's a

thing that is bound to catch the vaudeville eye and the managers are bound to tumble over each other to get.

Winifred Goff, baritone and technical director of the Henry W. Savage English Grand Opera Company, has sailed for London and Paris to look after some details for the production of Puccini's "Madame Butterfly" in America next season.

Seth Cabell Halsey, the young Washingtonian on the stage, who played the part of the Congressman in the "Education of Mr. Pipp" so successfully last season, has been re-engaged for the part by Digby Bell for the coming season.

The Shuberts will bring over next season Miss Lena Ashwell, one of the most highly thought of actresses on the other side. She has been leading lady with Charles Wyndham and has played many important roles.

Fuji-Ko, the Japanese actress, will present in London this season a one-act dream play, "The Love of a Geisha," in which is embodied the idea of a doctrine of Nirvana, reduced to popular form. She may come to this country later.

The new plays which have come to town this week are: New York Theater—Miss Blanche Ring in "His Honor the Mayor," a "summer-time entertainment," book by Messrs. C. E. Campbell and R. M. Skinner, music by Messrs. Julian Edwards and Alfred E. Aarons.

Academy of Music—E. H. Sothern and Miss Julia Marlowe in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." Lyric Theater—Henry E. Dixey in a revival of "The Man on the Box," a comedy by Grace Livingston Furniss, from the book by Harold McGrath.

Fourteenth Street Theater—The Theodore Drury Grand Opera Company in "Aida," Tuesday, "Carmen." Plays that still have the boards are: "The Girl of the Golden West," at Belasco's; "Brown of Harvard," at the Princess; "The Social Whirl," at the Casino; "The Lion and the Mouse," at the Lyceum; "The Girl Patsy," at the Savoy; "Twiddle-Twaddle," and burlesque, at Weber's Music Hall, and "The Embarrassment of Riches," at Wallick's.

The engagement of E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe at the Academy of Music will last for three weeks longer. Next week they play "Much Ado About Nothing." The week after, "Taming of the Shrew" and "Merchant of Venice," while the concluding week will be devoted to "Twelfth Night" and "Hamlet."

With the close of the season the players are making arrangements for their vacations. Ethel Barrymore has taken a house in Maine. On the conclusion of her long run in "Peter Pan" at the Em-

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E. H. Sothern has a country place in Jersey and Miss Marlowe one in the Catskills. However, they may go abroad. Edna May has made a big success in "The Belle of Mayfair" in London. Mr. Crane is in London, but will later join Mrs. Crane in Germany.

San Bernard is at Mt. Clemens. Later he will go to the Adirondacks with his family. Francis Wilson has completed a new home in the mountains. Otis Skinner has gone to Bryn Mawr, Pa., where he has a country estate. Joseph Wheelock, Jr., having recovered from an operation, will go West. William Collier and his company will play in Australia, and so it goes.

Adele Ritchie has set a new fashion which is hardly likely to become popular. She presented her made Gloria, which she uses in her play, "The Social Whirl," a \$350 diamond bracelet when

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Inez Plummer, Ingenue With Odette Tyler, at the Belasco.

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Adele Ritchie has set a new fashion which is hardly likely to become popular. She presented her made Gloria, which she uses in her play, "The Social Whirl," a \$350 diamond bracelet when

she was five years old. When the mare came on the stage with her new ornament, she created a sensation and seemed to enjoy it.

It is gratifying to know that the sudden illness of Ada Rehan, which interrupted her trip to Europe, is not serious. She soon will be well again and will go abroad.

"The Governor's Son," George M. Cohan's summer song show, will open on the Aerial Roof Garden, atop the New Amsterdam Theater, on Monday, June 4, where it is booked for a summer run.

Joseph Cawthorn and his wife will remain at their home at Asbury Park, until it is time to sail for London with Sousa's opera, "The Free Lance."

Grand opera by negroes is something unique. The Theodore Drury grand opera company gave a really creditable performance this week at the Fourteenth Street Theater. "Aida" was given for the "premiere." Estella Clough was the prima donna, while James H. Wortham essayed as Radames. On Tuesday night "Carmen" was given with Miss Mary Terrell in the title role and Frank Brown as Don Jose. These two bills alternated during the week.

Herr Direktor Corried does not propose to be taught napping by the chorus next season. He has established a school for choristers and proposes by the time for grand opera again to have a corps of musical strike breakers which will make him secure.

Dr. Hans Richter, who directs the Wagner performances at Covent Garden Opera House, London, has just conducted his 4,000th public performance, which was "Die Walkure." His records include some 12,000 full rehearsals and 25,000 to 35,000 piano rehearsals. During his winter season, the famous conductor appears at the Halle Concerta in Manchester. Dr. Richter, who is sixty-three, came to England first twenty-seven years ago.

Our Own Charlotte.

Evidently it is possible for some good thing to come out of Washington, in a theatrical line, and even Gotham is forced to admit it. For there is no doubt about Charlotte Walker's being a Washington girl, and here is what the New York Dramatic Mirror says of her:

"When Charlotte Walker, she of the many engagements, returns to the sea waves or the merry moonlight to rest her after the season's vicissitudes, she will carry the consciousness of several vivid fevers in the cap of her career. That more than half of the plays in which she appeared were failures was distinctly not her fault. They failed in spite of, not because of, Miss Walker. If she is ever serious enough to moralize, which I doubt, she will reflect that after this season's 'The Prodigal Son,' 'The Prince Chap,' 'As Ye Sow,' 'The Triangle,' 'The Optimist,' and 'The Embarrassment of Riches,' there can be no doubt that in the lighter roles in which she is the keynote and yet the essential atmosphere, she can scarcely be surpassed. She will be a wise Miss Walker if she declares unalterably against playing another heavy role for the next twenty years."

Fine, oh very fine, for Charlotte! Here's hoping, however, that it may not increase the size of the lady's head.

Would Rather Be an Ingenue Than Play Leading Roles

Miss Inez Plummer, the dainty little ingenue of the Odette Tyler company, has always lived in the atmosphere of the stage, for from the time she was born her father owned a first-class theater in Syracuse, N. Y., which property is still under his control. She is one notable exception of a girl whose parents were not bitter opponents to the adoption of a theatrical profession. Mrs. Plummer has been fond of the theater all her life, and when Inez was an infant in arms only able to gaze around in wonder her mother took her to the theater, where the actors and actresses made a great fuss over the manager's pretty baby.

It was at the age of two years that Inez Plummer made her first stage entrance. The play was that famous old one, "May Blossoms" which was one of the first to bring its writer, David Belasco, into prominence. Little Inez had no lines to speak. Her only duty was to walk and stand a few moments carrying a bird cage and a bunch of flowers. She promptly proceeded to pin the blossoms on herself and placed the cage just where it pleased her fancy. Then occurred the well-known incident with the late Sam Shubert, who instead of bringing on the usual property cart with which he had been rehearsing carried a live animal in his arms and announced that he intended to hang the cat. At this crucial juncture little Inez exclaimed, "Sammy Shubert if you hang that kitty I'll tell my mama on you!" Needless to say the impromptu speech secured the biggest hit of the evening and made little Miss Plummer's debut something to remember.

The "May Blossoms" debut was more of an accommodation to the manager of the company than anything else, for he was in despair at not being able to secure a suitable child, and the tiny actress had no thought of the future. She little suspected that later on she would become a real actress and make her first important success in another play by the same author.

When little Inez grew bigger she was sent to the finest boarding school in Syracuse, and then to New York to a finishing institution. She never thought of becoming an actress until she made the acquaintance of a fellow-student who intended going on the stage. Miss Plummer made up her mind quickly that she wanted to act, and three months after she received her diploma she had secured a position as Tabitha Drinker with the road company of "Janice Meredith." Her first experience was a long one, for the play remained out during nine months. In that time all the important cities of the country were visited, and the little girl from Syracuse had her first glimpse of the outside world. She played ingenue roles with the Shubert stock company in Syracuse for three summers, when such plays as "Under Two Flags," "The Christian," "The Wife," and "The Charity Ball" were produced.

Having gained so much by experience, she did not hesitate to accept Grace

## "JACK" MASON—A SHINING EXAMPLE OF THE VALUE OF STOCK WORK.

John Mason—popular "Jack" Mason—who will be seen in a delightful role in "The Liars" at the Columbia during the coming week, has not reached his present high position as leading man for Mrs. Fiske through any mere accident of circumstances. It is true that his family ideals and boyhood training were all such as to deprive him of any ambition in the direction of the footlights, and that he first came to look across them by accident, but it was work, and hard work, in stock companies under the supervision of past masters of the dramatic profession that gradually evolved his career as an actor.

Mr. Mason has, during his stage career, been associated with four historic stock organizations in three different cities and widely different circumstances and environments. His first season on the stage was spent at the old Walnut Street Theater, in Philadelphia. He was there at the death of its stock company. From the Walnut he went to the famous old Boston Museum, in 1879, and played there five consecutive years, until he joined the famous old Union Square Theater of A. M. Palmer. In 1884, the year that Mr. Palmer gave up his stock company at that theater, a company from which migrated players like Stuart Robson, J. H. Stoddard, Sarah Jewett, and others. In the following year he joined the stock company with which Steele Mackaye and Gustave Frohman opened the famous Lyceum Theater, in New York, and in later years, after another term at the Boston Museum, he returned to New York and rejoined the Lyceum Stock Company, which had passed into the hands of Daniel Frohman, and was a member of that company when it passed out of existence after having furnished the American stage with many of its present-day stars.

If Mr. Mason had followed the hereditary trend of his family he would have been a composer or musician of note, but would have not become associated with the stage. The family is one of the best known in New England. His grandfather, the late Dr. Lowell Mason, of Boston, was a noted composer, and by reason of his work in connection with the establishment of church choirs in this country has frequently been termed "the father of church music in America."

Dr. Mason composed the music to which "Nearer, My God, to Thee," the late President McKinley's favorite hymn, is now sung by millions of voices. That hymn was written about 1840 by Sarah Flower Adams, an English Unitarian, but its world-wide vogue was not acquired until about 1860, when Dr. Lowell Mason, of Boston, set it to the tune to which it is now sung. Dr. Mason was the father of five boys, all of whom had musical talent. One of these, Dr. William Mason, who is living at an advanced age in New York city, was a favorite pupil of Liszt, the composer, and was for many years one of the best known musical pedagogues in the United States. The other three brothers also had splendid musical talent, and the widely known Mason & Hamelin organ was established by them.

John Mason had a fine baritone voice, but did not care to become a singer and never made any serious study of music.



John Mason and Annie Russell in the Original Production of "Mice and Men"

Occasionally, however, during the course of his career he has drifted into light opera. In his earlier career on the stage he played with Maggie Mitchell in "The Little Barefoot," "Fanchon, the Cricketer," "Mignon," and similar productions. Later he toured in "The Tar and Tarantula," and when the Gilbert and Sullivan operas were in the height of their vogue he played in all of them except "Pinafore." In "Patience" he was the original Patience, and he was prominently cast in nearly all of the other Gilbertian productions.

Mason entered Columbia University in New York in 1876, and while there joined a club which gave an amateur performance of "The Liars" at the Columbia. He played in all of them except "Pinafore." In "Patience" he was the original Patience, and he was prominently cast in nearly all of the other Gilbertian productions.

That contest was responsible indirectly for Mason's debut upon the professional stage, because he became so absorbed in the contest that he paid little

attention to his studies, and was cogitating upon leaving college when one of the girls who had appeared in the amateur performance at Daly's happened to meet him and asked him whether he wished to join the company at the head of which she was to star at Bannard's Broadway Theater. Now Daly's Theater, where he served an apprenticeship, was the company's professional debut on the stage. The play was a failure. Mason received only \$5 for his week's work—\$3 less than he was promised. But he felt the sting of the stage microphone and went down to Philadelphia to join the Walnut Street Theater's famous old stock company in 1878, as utility man. He started in by carrying the spear, but got more important parts during the balance of the season—that being his first season on the stage. At the Walnut he met Lawrence Barrett, who commanded great influence with R. M. Field, owner of the famous old Boston Museum, which was demolished a few years ago. During the season that Mason was at the Walnut the company supported Barrett, Frank C. Bangs, Mary Anderson, John McCullough, Lotta Erling, and Janauska, with all of whom

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